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Regional Meetings

Southern California

On Saturday, October 30, 1948, Dr. Percy H. Houston of Occidental College convened on the campus of Occidental College a meeting called for the purpose of organizing a Southern California section of C. E. A. Present were seventy-one teachers of English from the following twenty-two colleges and junior colleges: Santa Ana College, San Bernardino Valley College, Immaculate Heart College, California Institute of Technology, Long Beach City College, U. C. L. A., U. S. C., Fullerton Junior College, Pasadena City College, Loyola University, Los Angeles City College, La Verne College, East Los Angeles Junior College, Chaffey College, Mount St. Mary's College, Santa Monica City College, University of Redlands, Occidental College, Whittier College, Chapman College, Glendale City College, and Mt. San Antonio College.

After registration, the members gathered at 10:30 A. M. in the Women's Lounge of Freeman Union, with Dr. Houston presiding. Here, after the business of organizing and the appointment of a nominating committee, Dr. Frank C. Baxter of U. S. C. delivered an address on "The Teaching of Poetry in College," At luncheon Dr. Kenneth S. Kurtz, chairman of the Department of English at Occidental College, spoke on "Emerson and Universals."

The afternoon session convened at 2:00 P. M. in the Women's Lounge. The nominating committee offered the following slate of officers for the new organizations:

Dr. Percy H. Houston (Occidental), president; Dr. Albert W. Upton (Whittier), vice-president; Miss Dorothy Nixon (Pasadena City College), secretary-treasurer.

These were unanimously elected, and the afternoon program then began with the new president in the chair. First, a panel on "The Fate of the Survey of English Literature"; Mr. Charles B. Jennings of East Los Angeles Junior College, chairman; Miss Dorothy Dixon of Pasadena City College, and Mr. John Mocine of Los Angeles City College. Miss Dixon strongly supported the Harvard report, and President Conant's **Education in a Divided World**; Mr. Mocine presented the case for the Survey course. A

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HEAVENS, He's Moral

In his thoughtful if brief article, "A Humble Remonstrance," in the September **The Critic,** Paul E. Reynolds inquires, "How shall we fight the pernicious habit of finding a moral in every piece of serious literature?" By a coincidence Gordon Keith Chalmers, in the latest (to me most acceptable) Chapbook ("Poetry and General Education") says: "I fail to see **how** one can teach, except according to his idea, however hazy, halting and tentative, of the ultimate purpose of life."

The Victorians may have been unco moral (though compare Gilbert's gay humor with Shaw's selfrighteous wit), but surely the alternative is not a scholarship dehydrated to the point that almost leaves out the text itself. (E. K. Chambers once remarked in my presence that there seemed only one thing left to do with Shakespeare, and that was to read him!)

Rollo Walter Brown, writing on Kittredge in the October **Atlantic,** refers to something he calls "completest (sic) disinterested understanding." Of course one understands what Mr. Brown means, theoretically; but practically speaking — and the glory of our subject is its intimate relation to life — the phrase is deathly, even absurd. It too easily lets in the indolent (for "bookkeeping" can be a form of indolence) on the one hand, and the gelded intellect on the other: sometimes the two together.

We have complete understanding about nothing; indeed it is the paradox of paradoxes (one that but few are equipped to deal with) that knowledge conducts to ignorance. It is to be hoped that one day this phenomenon will be more provided for in our educational process. At present we leave off where we should begin. The end of education is worship. Yet it is regarded as the great distinction of Science that it is "disinterested." Surely it is a scholarly finding to say that where you are not interested (i.e., have a stake) in God, you are, ipso facto, interested in the Devil. For moral neutrality is not possible to a moral being, any more than the impact of water is optional to a fish, where he moves and has his being. It is the vice of Science that it actually exalts this neutrality into a virtue; dragging everything, even English, in its wake.

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What Do YOU Think?

My few ideas center on memory-work. However, I do not mean memorizing of the mechanical, sing-song type; but thoughtful and purposeful cultivation of the memory, as an integral part of our composition and literature classes, day by day, at least to a greater extent than most of us cultivate it at present, in the classroom.

In our process of education, we memorize data of all sorts: historic, geographic, mathematic, scientific: all of which is not only appropriate but even necessary. Now, in view of this, it does seem strange that we do not include more memorizing in our literary, non-scientific classes. I mean the committing to memory of select passages that would develop not only the memory but also the mind and emotions of our students. This is not merely wishful thinking—not as I see it, not as experience has taught me. The faculty of memory is an absolute prerequisite to development of the mind, a prerequisite to education. According to Cicero, "Memory is the receptacle and sheath of all knowledge." If the memory is the treasure-house of the mind, would it not be wisdom on our part to store within the receptive minds of youth, golden gems of literature that are rich in thought, feeling, and beauty? It would surely be educational in the true and liberal sense.

The cultivation of the memory in literature classes of high school and college has always interested me, so much so in fact, that a few years ago I selected it for a simple experiment. My purpose was to determine, as far as possible, the educational value of memory-work in the classroom as demonstrated both in the oral and written work of my students. A class in freshman English served as my starting point, and an excellent one it really turned out to be. At the end of the year I had just about reached the conclusion that our college freshmen today, taken collectively, are really not the benighted mass that many instructors consider them to be. At any rate, my humble experiment in literary memorizing as an educational medium began with a group of thirty-six freshmen, who, pen in hand, three periods a week, were trying bravely to master the four forms of discourse; and the fourth were cul-

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English Major Programs At Syracuse

In our colleges and universities of today, departments of English face the problem of how best to serve a student population diverse in interests and abilities. They encounter it in the required courses of the freshman and sophomore years. Because of their flattering popularity, they have it still in the work of the last two years. Their advanced courses attract budding scientists, engineers, lawyers, medicos, businessmen and business women, as well as devotees of literature and the arts. The English majors, although more homogenous than the others in these courses, are still various enough. Among them are the prospective high school and college teachers, the hopeful poets and novelists, and the full-blown aesthetes. There are also many without professional literary interests who look on their English concentration as an extension of their general education: boys anticipating careers for which specialized training is unnecessary, girls waiting for destiny to materialize in the shape of desirable husbands. The range of intelligence is wide among majors as well as among non-majors.

The problem as it exists on the junior and senior level may be resolved in two ways. If a department believes that there are a body of subject matter and a type of intellectual discipline which every student of literature should have to be worthy of the name, it will set up a modest number of courses and hold those admitted to every one of them to a uniform standard of performance. If, on the other hand, a department believes that there is more than one road to intellectual salvation, it will diversify its offerings and its methods with the intention of giving all students who come to it as much as they are fitted to receive. It will furnish professional training of several kinds for those who are specialists. It will require work of superior students, whether specialists or not, which will challenge their capacities. But it will also provide courses and even a major program for those of average talents and general interests. Our Department at Syracuse believes in and has chosen the way of diversification. We have responsibilities, we feel,

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Even, And Particularly, Mr. Eliot

Let Mr. Eliot's Nobel Prize be his monument. For what is his place in the Democratic culture he has renounced, he, the apostle of those who distrust Democracy and the art which it nourishes and the education which must nourish it? Whatever his absolute merit, and there is question enough about that, his cult of the erudite, the exquisite, the pale thought delicately obscured, the haughty disdain, the determination to be different for different's sake — and his resolute backwardness — seem esoteric or merely quaint to all but a handful in America. He does not speak to our culture, and what he says is wholly unsympathetic with its assumptions.

But Mr. Eliot and his ilk provide an ideal "construct" for those who would build about literature an elaborate scaffold of higher criticism or scholarly interpretation. To them, literature is a special preserve for the specially initiated, who must undergo a special training in a special technique of appreciation. They must know backgrounds. They must know history. They must have theories of aesthetics. They must compare. To read a book "for pleasure"? Trivial. To discuss its "meaning"? Superficial. Books must be studied, analyzed, taken apart, put together, fitted into a cultural pattern. No wonder students find "English" a ritualistic observance. The ritual may have its rewarding elevation, they do not doubt it; but if that is what they must do to read a good book, then they guess they'll have to pass it up and leave it to the English majors.

Do poets write poems or novelists novels or dramatists plays that they may be so "processed"? To ask is to be answered. Writers would delight, they would move. Immediately. And increasingly. And ultimately they are moral. Even, and particularly, Mr. Eliot.

Literary study that is not finally and explicitly moral is dilletante, sterile. and unworthy consideration in publicly supported college education. Such education is for all students in all colleges. It is presumed to develop informed social and moral values. If it does not, on what basis may it be supported except the utilitarian? The end of literary study in the program is to reach all students in some level, and in some way to make them feel the delight and the moral values in the literature studied. To succeed is to satisfy a warm and natural interest in all students. and to fail is to follow a false logic of choice or of criticism. Success gives intelligent pleasure. increases wisdom, multiplies the public for good books, and opens for cultivation vast areas in which fuller appreciation will develop naturally. No teacher need be ashamed of the task, or feel it an unworthy challenge to his skill.

FRUSTATION FORUM?

What have members to say about this reply to an innocent editor's request for copy? The editor hopes it's aplenty.

I have read the notes and articles in **The CEA Critic** with interest, and, as a result, one persistent question has recurred in my mind. Perhaps it might suggest an investigation which you would like to pursue. It is this: Is the **Critic** merely a forum through which the members of the CEA can air their annoyances, frustations, and innovations, or is it actually a breeding place for ideas that are really acted on by other members who read them? In other words, are the experiments and reforms which are presented really taken up and adopted by any considerable number of teachers? As I look back over my experience and recall how year after year our department has tried out new text books, new techniques and "approaches", and new materials, I sometimes wonder how measurable the gain has been. Are we demonstrably doing a better job today than my teachers were when I was an undergraduate? Can it be that the individual teacher is the only real key to the situation? Doesn't each teacher work out more or less for himself a set of procedures and devices which are adapted to his personality and abilities and by which he feels he can get the best results? Of course I know that a certain amount of contagion is always going on among people who are closely associated but I simply wonder how definite the contagion can be through the pages of such publications as the **Critic.** I am sure that you and the rest of the officers would like to know what tangible results, if any, you have been getting.

So there's your assignment! Can you find out? I'd like to have my skepticism annihilated.

Arthur H. Nethercot
Northwestern University

What Do YOU Think?

(Continued from Page 1)

tivating intelligent reading. Our reading matter was fortunately varied; and from it we selected brief but appealing passages which we first evaluated and then committed to memory as part of our class procedure. Not only did we memorize these passages but we also tried to put them to work in the classroom, in our written papers, for example. True, the particular quotation used by this or that student was not always used in the right place and at the right time but very often it actually was. And, if the aggregate results of my efforts with these freshmen did not entirely equal my hopes, at least my humble experiment with them was "something attempted, something done."

The survey of English literature served as my experimental medium in the sophomore year and in this class were most of the students who had worked with me as freshmen. Now I am wondering whether or not this course is actually "sloppy." If it is really a "sloppy" course; then, as a certain professor of English told me recently, it is very evident that the "coursers", not the course, are to blame. Actually, the Survey can be an ideal medium for the study of literature and appreciation. It includes a wide variety of poetry and prose that gives to the young mind food for thought and to the young heart artistic delight.

As our Survey moved on we memorized many passages as part of the daily class work, and occasionally took time out for short memory-festes. Certain students would recite some of their favorite quotations, state why they memorized them; and then ask for identification of author and source. These brief festes were enjoyable and at the same time they were relaxation from the regular class routine.

Actually, it was in an advanced writing class that my humble memory-experiment blossomed into flower—if that is not too elaborate a phrase here. This class consisted of juniors, most of whom had studied the Survey with me. This being so, I took particular notice of their compositions, term-papers, etc., with the hope that they might include, in the right place and at the right time, some of our memorized quotations. Fortunately, they did and—believe it or not—usually with the desired effect.

With this course my project ended. It had served its purpose and satisfied my curiosity. Was it worth the time and effort? Yes, absolutely. Did it have any educational value? It certainly did. So, I am still of the opinion that our English and literature classes should include more cultivation of the memory. If students in technical and non-liberal courses memorize and memorize, why not students in liberal and cultural courses also? Beautiful and impressive literary passages, if memorized thoughtfully, impress the plastic, young mind and oftentimes abide there far into post-school life.

Sister M. Brigetta
College of St. Scholastica
Duluth, Minnesota

From Ibsen to Hellman

PATTERNS IN MODERN DRAMA

By LODWICK HARTLEY and ARTHUR I. LADU, North Carolina State College

This systematic primer of dramatic criticism for the beginning student contains seven plays selected for their freshness and merit. The plays were chosen as illustrating various patterns of dramatic techniques, moods and ideas; demonstrating both American and European styles; and showing the impact of social and political thinking on drama.

The fresh — not anthology-worn — plays of this volume are: **An Enemy of the People** by Ibsen; **Uncle Vanya** by Chekhov; **The Pigeon** by Galsworthy; **The Emperor Jones** by O'Neill; **Craig's Wife** by Kelly; **The Male Animal** by Thurber and Nugent; **The Little Foxes** by Hellman.

Published 1948, 640 pp., 5½"x8"

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70 Fifth Avenue, New York 11

I'VE BEEN READING

Members are invited to contribute reviews of books, old or new, which they wish to call to the attention of other English teachers. Professor J. Gordon Eaker, the Assistant Editor, is in charge of I'VE BEEN READING. He is Head, Department of English, Jersey City Junior College, Jersey City, N. J.

Comments on reviews will be welcomed.

Faulkner's "The Hamlet"

The animalism of this book, shared by its persons, is not intended as literal transcription. Faulkner's intention is apparently to image the things most deeply rooted in the unconscious of his rustic community. The incidents and characters are a sort of magnified projection of what the Southern countryman talked about as he sat by the stove or crackerbarrel in the late nineties. The two horse stories are obviously intended to do what horse stories should do — that is, to entice the listener to the extreme limits of the credible. The story of Eula, and the story of Ike and the cow, and of Mink and the murder, and the story of how Ratcliffe outsmarted Flem over the goats but Flem played him for a sucker about the buried money, and finally went off to Jefferson to be a big-town banker —these are all the stuff of crackerbarrel legend, blown up to monstrous size.

The themes of these legends are seized and dropped, picked up again and again, with variations in key, pitch, volume and rhythm. The note of smart country trading begins Book I and ends Book IV. There is a placid horse story in Book I and a violent line in Book IV. The theme of sex, introduced in Book II, is developed on an inhuman level in Book III, and returns at intervals. Horses and money are the substance of Books I and IV, and bloody violence of Book III. Sometimes the themes recur with modifications. For instance, the story of the frustrated schoolmaster and his child-pupil who is already a woman, is almost parallelled by the story of Houston and his wife.

The Hamlet is a four-movement semi-comic rhapsody in purple, its recurring melody or discord a medley of rustic Americana. This muscial orchestration in fictional form is grotesque and yet reveals truth lying below the level of consciousness. The illusion of reality corresponds to that of a nightmare, and is accompanied by a nightmarish paralysis of the will. Just as Temple Drake in **Sanctuary** stands rooted before her private incubus, so in the communal dream of **The Hamlet** an impotent village watches as the Snopeses remorselessly advance.

Strang Lawson
Colgate University

MORAL!

(Continued from Page 1)

I am well aware of the danger of evangelism's substituting for shoddy scholarship (though, God knows, we have enough of the latter without the former); but the hazard in a scientific age is not too great. Unscholarly evangelism is of course reprehensible but even that is preferable to mummification — a consummation (according to some of its exemplifiers) devoutly to be wished.

One may suspect that Mr. Reynolds' horror of the moral aligns, in addition to its tip from Science, with our bland idealistic disposal of the Devil — a process I once listened to as it flowed down from (of all placess) a pulpit!, whence the air-treading pacifist, with matchless irony, had a passing good word for Hitler (1938).

Take away the moral aspects of, say, **Macbeth** and **Othello,** take away "the pity of it, Iago," and what do we have? "But never mind the pity of it (our emancipated literalist would say), that's a moral consideration." In truth, I regard **Othello** as the most subtle parable (of light and darkness(ever written. And not to teach it as such is an insult to the intelligence, of both tutor and taught. Desdemona and Othello are something more than dramatis personae; they are sacraments. The palpable villainy of Iago is only one factor, and the grossest, in the several agencies that cheat us (for we too are Othello) of the embraces of Heavenly Light. Rightly to name the villain in **Othello** would be to know what God and the Devil is.

Though well over fifty, and with in many ways enviable equipment (including the hells of both war and peace), I am given to wonder whether I am ready to teach **Othello.**

May it not be the trouble with **Hamlet** (God help me) that it is hazy in respect of a moral? And is not this in turn due to the fact that Hamlet himself is as much clinical as tragic? Shakespeare fobs us off with the idea of a "sweet prince" at the end, but he himself knew better, haply, especially if the play be a throttling of his own Mr. Hyde, the dark fellow of the sonnets.

There is no compunction in Hamlet's death correspondent with Macbeth's, Othello's, Lear's. His taking off is one of the most contrived and stagey things in all drama. The play does not gather as the night gathers; it is wound up like the affairs of a bankrupt.

Hamlet is "unnatural" — almost a swear-word with Shakespeare, and it is difficult to believe that the author of **Macbeth** liked either the man or the botched and trickey play. (Laurence Olivier's relative failure is really Shakespeare's). It is an irrefragable rule in tragedy that we must terribly care about the protagonist's death as a "bleeding piece of earth," a piece of ourselves indeed. But with Hamlet there is an intrusive feeling of relief, as in the end of a chronic patient.

So also there must be a sense conveyed that Othello's occupation's gone, "I have lived long enough" (Macbeth). But this too is not wrought for in **Hamlet.** Hamlet's occupation was still open; to talk. It could even be that, artistically speaking (God help me again!) Hamlet should survive. Talkers do. He is the renascence man gone bad, cruel and top-heavy with intellect, cloven from Life. He flourishes at the United Nations, and perhaps the last best portraiture of him was George Bernard Shaw's incarnation of rant in **Too True to be Good,** on whom the curtain falls before he can end his speech, which indeed has no end.

No end because (as with us) he has **no End.**

Is it disloyal to our profession to suggest that there are numbers of him)the Renascence-man-gone-bad gone bad) in our bers of him the Renascence-heart, and read). We talk and talk, and talk the truth away. Intellectual puritans, we dare not enter Heaven, instinctively knowing perhaps — as with Hamlet — that "felicity" would be purgatorial. We babble, like any dying Falstaff, of the green fields of peace, but should not know what to do were we released into them (as of course we shall be when we are fit for their deserving). I would estimate that about one person in ten thousand deserves peace, and that an even less proportion could stand it — peace agitators least of all.

We are tragic, but not greatly so. And conceivably the tragedy is still further cheapened by the parroted cliche (now at least fifty years stale) that the finding of morals is a "pernicious habit." Nor are we anyway helped by the fact that those two sovereign ends of Education (and of English in particular) are regarded as detrimental — I mean the flowering of the Imagination, and an interested devotion to the at present irrelevance — the Absolute.

A. E. Johnson,
Syracuse University.

Bulletin Board

The Goethe Bicentennial Foundation (135 S. LaSalle St., Chicago 3) has been created to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Goethe's birth in the summer of 1949. Herbert Hoover is Honorary Chairman and Robert M. Lutchins, Chairman. The Foundation plans to "re-examine and reinterpret Goethe's thought in relation to its contemporary significance" in a series of discussions by the world's most distinguished scholars and men of letters at a world Goethe Convocation at Aspen, Colorado, June 30 to July 14, 1949. Goethe's works are in the process of a new translation, 10 vols., Univ. of Chicago Press. The first volume will be issued in time for the bicentennial observance.

From a letter with a contribution to The CRITIC: "The accompanying note should be useful to teachers, though it may be too 'heavy' for The CRITIC, which I should like to say I read with much interest. Consequently I would rather have this note appear there than in a scholarly journal."

Purdue English Notes (published Oct., Dec., Feb., and April in the October, 1948 issue has a good summary of the functional grammar desirable in a high school graduate who expects to enter college, and in one who doesn't expect to, for that matter. Editor: George S. Wykoff, Dept. English, Purdue Univ., Lafayette, Indiana.

Colgate University has established a Preceptorial Reading Laboratory under the direction of George F. Pastore, Asst. Prof. Psychology.

The sixth annual Reading Clinic Institute at Temple University has been announced for the week of January 31, 1949.

Ben Gray Lumpkin has got out issue 2 of his **Folksongs on Records.** It lists the 200 records of the first issue (now exhausted) plus 200 more. The list is copyright; price 50 cents. Address Prof. Lumpkin at 428 Arapahoe, Boulder, Colorado.

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D. C. HEATH AND COMPANY

The Place for Grammar

(A paper read at the Indiana C.E.A. meeting at the University of Notre Dame, May 1, 1948.)

Freshman English, brought to a strange, unhealthy corpulence by our over-feeding it in an ambitious attempt to make it a complete curriculum of general culture in itself, was some time ago hospitalized for observation. Diagnosis revealed some torpid and non-functioning digestive organs which required immediate surgery. The case had been made more acute, it was said, by kindly but erroneous efforts at bottle-feeding to remedy an earlier malnutrition. Most of the doctors agreed that the patient was in a bad way. A few even advised a mercy killing.

At length, however, English I was wheeled into the operating room. The avowedly unhealthy parts were removed and replaced by alien new ones! Doctors from various sections of the country, notably Michigan, Iowa, and California, expressed the belief that these new parts would function perfectly. At any rate, English I has been released from the hospital renewed and rejuvenated. It has, in fact, been almost unrecognizably changed into Communication and is making a very lusty noise in the world.

But how did grammar fare in this remarkable operation? Badly enough. For the Denver doctors and certain others insisted on its removal as a non-functioning part and now feel that the changed and rejuvenated patient is doing very well without it. Educators in general and English teachers in particular are watching its progress with interest, some of us with concern, fearing that the operation, though mainly successful, has removed a necessary part.

What can grammar contribute to education for these times? Does grammar have a special place and serve special ends in the freshman courses? If so, what methodology will best insure that this contribution be kept at its maximum importance and amount?

The new emphasis on communication as a necessary tool in the democratic way of life gives, not less motive, but increased motive for the mastery of the basic sentence relationships dealt with in grammar. For if language is to be effective as a tool, it must be clear and forceful, and these qualities depend on the use of right sentence relationships. An inexact, poorly ordered sentence presents an idea at a disadvantage and is a barrier to understanding, while a sentence which shows exact, controlled word relationships projects its idea at proper value.

Communication on its lower levels may express merely wishes, desires, or feelings and be mainly unthinking and unexamined. On the other hand, communication "for high purposes" is unrelenting in its demands. It requires intellectual effort and discipline. It means skill in the combining, subordinating, and general ordering of words and word groups. Moreover, it means an awareness of the effect of words on others, for its success is not tested by what the speaker or writer means to say or by what he thinks he is saying, but by his impact upon the listener or reader. One of the chief values of the study of grammar, therefore, is that it focuses the student's attention on the way words and groups of words are joined and ordered in the communication of thought. An understanding of sentences and of sentence patterns in reading and a working knowledge of them applied to speech and writing is likely to be reflected in clearer thinking and an increase of mental maturity.

The place of grammar in the freshman English courses is, I believe, a basic and central one. Seldom in our college curricula is any other course offered which gives the student an opportunity to study the language patterns of standard English so that he may better understand his reading and shape his own language patterns more effectively. If he is to gain a knowledge of English grammar, he must, in most cases, gain that knowledge in his freshman year. There is perhaps no more fitting place even if grammar were offered later. The college freshman, standing on the threshold of mental maturity, is in both an impressionable and a critical stage of his development. In the new environment of college, his perception of language, as of other environmental factors, is sharpened. He is more keenly aware of his own language practices and those of his associates. What he needs, and normally wants, from his freshman courses is a practical linguistic knowledge that will give him two kinds of freedom: freedom **from** his language inhibitions, impeding habits of locution and bondage to dogmatic texts or teaching; and freedom for developing, under democratic guidance, a linguistic intelligence which will enable him to exercise good judgment in his choice of locutions and to make use of the rich resources of language in serving worthy ends. Grammar, rightly taught, will help him ot gain these freedoms.

This grammar should not be solely, or even chiefly, a review of high-school grammar or, speaking paradoxically, it should not be a review of the grammar which was not learned in high-school. Neither should it consist mainly of workbook drill, which may, very understandably, seem to the student unmotivated and pointless. Rather, college grammar should be a study of a systematized body of functional linguistic principles, taught scientifically with the aim of giving the learner a practical knowledge of the English language. . . .

The core of the approach, as pointed out by Mr. Porter G. Perrin, is **"understanding why one word or construction is better than another and in what circumstances it is better.** It suggests a principle — appropriateness—and indicates how by considering the appropriateness of his language a person can decide for himself what he is to say or write in a given spot."

The learner, if he is to derive the maximum benefit form the study, should develop a scientific attitude toward language, learn to appreciate its skills, and, realizing the part which the development of these skills may play in his life, work to acquire them. The maker of the text has the role, first, of collecting, classifying, and stating the facts of modern usage; and finally, of formulating, as the result of his scientific study, the "laws" or principles of grammar. The part of the teacher is also threefold: to help the learner to have a clear understanding of a reasonable number of language facts and evaluations; to show him how to apply this knowledge in his speaking, listening, reading, and writing; and then to leave him free to shape his own course in the use he will make of langugae.

The last point is particularly important, both in methodology and in its influence on the learner's attitude. Results as well as methods will be likely to improve if we teachers of English often remind ourselves that we are the guardians neither of a mythical perfection of language nor of any learner's choice of the language he is to use. Why, after a thoroughly clear presentation of the content of the freshman course and proper guidance in its application, need we feel any greater concern for the student's later career than do instructors in other fields? Would we not feel happily freed from a responsibility which is not really ours, but which we have over-zealously assumed or which our colleagues have unthinkingly placed upon us, if we would put the responsibility for the use of language where it belongs: squarely upon the shoulders of the learner? And would not that placing of responsibility give the student himself a new sense of freedom — of the only kind of freedom which is worthwhile: freedom **with responsibility?**

In closing these remarks on grammar, I should like to illustrate what our present methods and aims should **not** be by telling a story.

An English teacher enlisted in the army as a private. He had been in the service only a few days when his captain posted a notice on the bulletin board. The teacher read it and sniffed. "It's pretty hard," he told another soldier, "to take orders from a man who knows no better than to end a sentence with a preposition."

The captain overheard him. The next day the bulletin board carried this notice: "There is in this company a certain amount of insubordination, up with which I shall not put."

BERTHA M. WATTS
Canterbury College,
Danville, Indiana

For the spring term —

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REGIONAL MEETINGS —

(Continued from Page 1)

vigorous discussion followed. Dr. James L. Wortham of U. C. L. A. then led a discussion on the topic "The Objectives of Freshman Composition," a subject of perennial interest.

Eastern Pennsylvania

Thirteen colleges sent representatives to an Eastern Pennsylvania CEA Meeting at Pennsylvania Military College, Chester, Pa., October 30. The meeting resulted in a permanent CEA regional organization which anticipates annual meetings such as that held at P.M.C. Officers elected are Francis C. Mason (Gettysburg), president; Edward P. Sheekey (LaSalle), vice-president; and Dean B. Armold (P.M.C.), secretary-treasurer.

The P.M.C. meeting included two sessions. At the morning session Professor Mason spoke on "The English Program and General Education." His address will appear in a later issue of The CRITIC.

Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Director of Temple University's Reading Clinic, addressed the afternoon session. Dr. Betts explained the organization and activity of the modern reading clinic. He emphasized that intelligence test scores do not necessarily show positive correlation with reading ability and that the reading test score does not necessarily mean reading **capacity.** For progress towards the solution of the reading problem, Dr. Betts advised Departments of English to use the following techniques: (1) screening tests, (2) grouping students at specific levels of teaching, (3) teaching silent before oral reading, (4) teaching auditory before visual word discrimination, (5) developing skills in meaningful situations. Dr. Betts also stated that 50 per cent of the retarded reading cases can be helped.

Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina

Duke University
October 23, 1948

Morning Session:

Johanne Stockholm, Sweet Briar College, presiding.

Archibald A. Hill, University of Virginia: "Style and Correctness in English Composition."

Atcheson L. Hench, University of Virginia, opening the discussion.

Luncheon ticket, $1.25.
Walter Prichard Eaton.

Afternoon Session:

Lodwick Hartley, North Carolina State College, presiding and leading the discussion.

Katharine Gilbert, Duke University: "The Current Amity of Poetry and Philosophy."

Over sixty members were present, representing seventeen colleges. In addition, there were a number of visitors.

The criterion of correctness, said Mr. Hill, is currency in standard written English; the principal criterion of style is clarity. Mr. Hill distinguished between normative or prescriptive grammar on the one hand and descriptive on the other and drew a sharp line between both kinds of grammar and the study of "the excellence of possible variants," which he labeled "a part of literary criticism." Standard English, he maintains, should be tested from the files of a national periodical rather than a handbook, for "handbooks copy from each other as cockroaches live by eating each other." Discussion of Mr. Hill's paper was led by his colleague, Mr. Atcheson L. Hench. Using as illusstrations a number of sentences with initial or final dangling modifiers, he showed that the "front-enders" are offensive when the "back-enders" are not; hence the trouble is not logicality, but style. Frequent discrepancies between canon and practice even among those who declare the canon are not slips in practice, according to Mr. Hench, but errors in the canon. The point of view of Professors Hill and Hench was challenged in discussion by various members who maintained that the speakers were accepting as their criterion currency on an insufficiently high level and that the English instructor should support the highest and purest level as the criterion for his students.

At luncheon Walter Prichard Eaton's reminiscences of his early contacts with literature and of his student days were punctuated with seasoned comments on literature and pedagogy.

Plato's "ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy" is no more, said Mrs. Gilbert. She spoke of three ways in which certain recent poets have talked about "naked man in a naked world" and so shared the function of philosophers. The poet goes farther than the philosopher, she said, and suggests compensations to help men bear the nakedness Referring to Whitehead as preeminent among recent philosophers, she gave final emphasis to the amity of poetry and philosophy in a sentence of his: "All philosophy is but a seeking of conventional language for the intuition of the poet."

At the business meeting the chairman of the nominating committee presented the following slate: for president, Miss Mabel Davidson, Randolph-Macon Woman's College; for vice-president, Mr. A. C. Jordan, Duke University; for secretary-treasurer, Miss Martha Dabney Jones, Saint Mary's Junior College. The report was unanimously adopted and the officers declared elected.

MAJORS AT SYRACUSE

(Continued from Page 1)

both for the intellectual elite and for the average men and women in the undergraduate body. If we do not develop able teachers from the former as well as able civic and business leaders who will support the teaching of our cultural tradition, we shall have failed (as its transmitters). If we do not increase the receptivity of the latter to this tradition, we shall have deprived them of real values and also have made the future tasks of our elite much more difficult.

In a period of soul searching last year about its own rapid development, the Syracuse Department of English concluded that it had done passably well in expanding general education in its field for juniors and seniors from other departments, but that it had not kept up with the times in the training of its own majors. We had added course after course to our offerings in response to widespread demand for instruction in American literature, in contemporary literature, and in composition of several kinds as well as in the traditional divisions of British letters, and we had increased our staff proportionally to the increase in course enrollments. Discovering, somewhat to our surprise, that there were as many non-majors as majors in most of our advanced classes, we accommodated our instruction to the former, relating literature or composition to their several academic backgrounds as often as possible and striving to reach the understandings of the uninitiate. Teaching of this kind, while fairly adequate for our weaker majors, was hardly so for the keen and purposive ones. Course requirements for our General Major had become outmoded because of the diversification of clientele and the proliferation of courses. They were too specialized for the more or less casual seeker of culture, too elastic as directives for the serious student of literature or the would-be writer, who had a score of courses to pick from. Those for the English Teaching Major, the program for the training of high school teachers to be, had been less affected by the change of circumstances, but they too needed some revision. The system of advisement which had been well adapted for pre-war conditions was overtaxed by the post-war enrollment.

To improve our work with the majors, we prepared for a number of changes in it which would go into full effect in the first term of 1948-49. We made some revisions in the course requirements for the General Major but not for the English Teaching Major. We set up three programs for superior students with clearly defined interests: a Special Major in English Literature, a Special Major in American Literature, and a Special Major in Composition. We designated certain courses and sections

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of courses to be offered in this fall semester as primarily for the benefit of enrollees in the new programs and for other outstanding students. And we expanded our advisory system for majors so that, in every term, each one of them might have generous individual counselling about his courses, English and other, for the following term or terms. Last spring, we announced the changes and did the counselling for the fall session. At this writing, four hundred and fifty majors are putting our array of programs to the test of use. Although they seem to approve of the experiment, we are in no position as yet to proclaim its success. I can only describe the program, leaving judgment of them to the readers of the **Critic**.

The General Major is intended to serve individuals of several types — the student of average abilities whatever his interests, the student of superior ability who has diffuse rather than special interests in the field of English, and the student also of superior ability who is dividing his attention between English and another field (Journalism or Radio, for example). Anyone may enter the program who has attained to junior standing in the College of Liberal Arts and who has maintained a C average in Freshman and Sophomore English. Some three hundred and sixty are now enrolled in it. All must take at least twenty-four hours of upper division courses in the Department to complete their major. Since they are pursuing various ends, they have been given considerable latitude of choice. The pattern is as follows: advanced composition, six hours; Shakespeare, three; any course in English literature before 1900, three; another course in either English or American literature before 1900, three; free electives in the Department, nine. Additional work in composition may not be counted among the free electives. Members of our staff have advised their charges as to sensible combinations of courses within this framework and in relation to other studies, but they have not been dictatorial.

The English Teaching Major is open to any junior in Liberal Arts who has completed Freshman and Sophomore English and who has been accepted for dual enrollment in the School of Education. Because of the high standards for admission to that School, only sixty are now taking it. All presumably intend to teach English in high school. They too must complete twenty-four hours of upper division work in our Department. Their courses in English, as in Education and a second teaching subject, are quite rigidly prescribed. Those presently required in the major field are: advanced composition, three hours; history of the English language, three; Shakespeare, three; backgrounds of English literature, six; American literature, six; and a literary type, three. The program will be modified in the near future in conformity with the changes which have been and are now being made in high-school English in New York State.

The three Special Majors are designed for able students whose interests are pretty clearly focused. Admission to them is at the discretion of the committee in charge. Candidates must have maintained at least a B average in English during their first two years and have obtained the recommendation of at least one English instructor. About thirty juniors are now enrolled in the three programs. Those in the Majors in English Literature and American Literature have various careers in mind — college teaching, publishing, and others. Those in the Composition Major would, in most cases, like to become professional writers, but they are all quite aware that this ambition is difficult to realize. Thirty hours are required for each of the majors, a considerable number of them in courses reserved mainly for these programs. The best students in each may become candidates for departmental honors in the senior year. All these will take a comprehensive oral examination at the end of that year.

The hours in the Special Major in English Literature will be normally distributed as follows: history of the English language, three; Shakespeare, three; another great English author, three; three courses in English literary periods other than those of Shakespeare and the other great author studied, nine; a literary type as exemplified in English literature, three; a course in American literature, three; electives in English literature, six. Since competency in writing is a prerequisite to admission, no course in composition is required. Students in this program will do nore writing in their subject matter courses than those in the General Major. Candidates for honors will substitute a three-hour honors course in the second term of senior year for a three-hour elective in English literature. In this, a long essay will be required.

Of the thirty hours required for the Special Major in American Literature, three are in the history of the English language; nine n English literature, and eighteen in American literature. Of the nine, three must be devoted to the study of a great English author; the remaining six are elective. The eighteen in American literature are to be distributed as follows: forms and forces in American literature, six; contemporary American literature, three; a great American writer, three; and a literary type exemplified in American literature, three; an elective in American literature, three. No course in composition is required, since competency in writing is assumed. Honors candidates will substitute an honors course for the American elective in the second term of senior year. A long essay will be required in the honors course.

Of the thirty hours for the Special Major in Composition, three are to be devoted to the history of the English Language, three to literary criticism, twelve to English and American literature, and twelve to composition. Of the twelve in literature, three must be given to a major English or American writer, and three to a literary type; the others are elective. The twelve hours in composition will normally be spent in courses especially designed for this program, the Junior Writing Workshop and the Senior Writing Conference. Sophomores planning to take the major are encouraged to elect the sophomore course in composition in preparation for it. Honors will be awarded on the basis of quality rather than of quantity of production. The instruction offered in composition is designedly broad in character, for it is our belief that a general training in creative work is about as practical for the hopeful writer as one for particular markets and far more valuable as a cultural discipline.

With our five widely different types of major all now in operation, we hope that we shall be able to do as well by the superior as by the ordinary individual, by the more or less professionally minded student of literature as by the amateur. We shall modify the programs as our experience grows in order that we may do better by all kinds and conditions of students.

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When long-awaited dawn shows but a cast
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For sun, then comes a shining hope at last
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